

Most people don't know how to get out of a sinking vehicle

June 4 2019



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How to get out of a submerging vehicle isn't common knowledge according to a recent report in *Injury Epidemiology*.

The Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management-based study found a majority of people had [knowledge](#) of vehicle submersions from the media, but they were unaware of an effective self-rescue protocol.

Vehicle submersions account for up to 10 percent of all drownings in high-income countries. Reports indicate that occupants may be conscious and functional, but possibly making incorrect decisions for self-rescue leading to drowning.

The study investigated current public knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding vehicle submersion incidents and to determine if individuals, who are aware of [educational efforts](#) regarding vehicle submersions, indicated better responses.

According to the recently published article, a majority of respondents had knowledge of vehicle submersions from the media, but they were not aware of an effective self-rescue protocol.

"Even though the probability of being in a vehicle submersion is low, this type of accident has one of the highest mortality rates of any type of single-vehicle accident, and death by drowning is usually preventable," says Gerren McDonald, the study's co-author and University of Manitoba Applied Health Sciences Ph.D. student.

McDonald adds that passengers have only about one minute to self-exit from a sinking [vehicle](#); they should not rely on calling emergency dispatch.

"Simply increasing public knowledge of SWOC [SEATBELTS off, WINDOWS open, OUT immediately, CHILDREN first] would help to decrease the high fatality rate associated with this type of road traffic accident."

More information: Gerren K. McDonald et al. Public knowledge, attitudes and practices of vehicle submersion incidents: a pilot study, *Injury Epidemiology* (2019). [DOI: 10.1186/s40621-019-0192-0](https://doi.org/10.1186/s40621-019-0192-0)

Provided by University of Manitoba

Citation: Most people don't know how to get out of a sinking vehicle (2019, June 4) retrieved 11 July 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-06-people-dont-vehicle.html>

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